# Christian Education of Youth

Encyclical Letter
of
Pope Pius XI

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OF HIS HOLINESS

# PIUS XI

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE

# POPE

TO THE PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES, ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS AND OTHER ORDINARIES IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH THE APOSTOLIC SEE, AND TO ALL THE FAITHFUL OF THE CATHOLIC WORLD, ON

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF YOUTH

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# ENCYCLICAL LETTER

## Of His Holiness

# PIUS XI

## By Divine Providence

# POPE

**To the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries in Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See, and to All the Faithful of the Catholic World on**

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF YOUTH

**Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children**

**Health and Apostolic Benediction**

REPRESENTATIVE on earth of that Divine Master Who while embracing in the immensity of His love all mankind, even unworthy sinners, showed nevertheless a special tenderness and affection for children, and expressed Himself in those singularly touching words: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me."[1] We also on every occasion have endeavored to show the predilection wholly paternal which We bear towards them, particularly by our assiduous care and timely instructions with reference to the Christian education of youth.

## Reasons for Treating of Christian Education

And so, in the spirit of the Divine Master, We have directed a helpful word, now of admonition, now of exhortation, now of direction, to youths and to their educators, to fathers and mothers, on various points of Christian education, with that solicitude which becomes the common Father of all the faithful, with

1Mark x. 14: Sinite parvulos venire ad me.

an insistence in season and out of season, demanded by our pastoral office and inculcated by the Apostle: "Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine."[2] Such insistence is called for in these our times, when, alas, there is so great and deplorable an absence of clear and sound principles, even regarding problems the most fundamental.

Now this same general condition of the times, this ceaseless agitation in various ways of the problem of educational rights and systems in different countries, the desire expressed to Us with filial confidence by not a few of yourselves, Venerable Brethren, and by members of your flocks, as well as Our deep affection towards youth above referred to, move Us to turn more directly to this subject, if not to treat it in all its well-nigh inexhaustible range of theory and practise, at least to summarize its main principles, throw full light on its important conclusions, and point out its practical applications.

Let this be the record of Our Sacerdotal Jubilee which, with altogether special affection, We wish to dedicate to our beloved youth, and to commend to all those whose office and duty is the work of education.

Indeed never has there been so much discussion about education as nowadays; never have exponents of new pedagogical theories been so numerous, or so many methods and means devised, proposed and debated, not merely to facilitate education, but to create a new system infallibly efficacious, and capable of preparing the present generations for that earthly happiness which they so ardently desire.

The reason is that men, created by God, to His image and likeness and destined for Him Who is infinite perfection, realize today more than ever amid the most exuberant material progress, the insufficiency of earthly goods to produce true happiness either for the individual or for the nations. And hence they feel more keenly in themselves the impulse towards a perfection that is higher, which impulse is implanted in their rational nature by the Creator Himself. This perfection they seek to acquire by means of education. But many of them with, it would seem, too great insistence on the etymological meaning of the word, pretend to draw education out of human nature itself and evolve it by its

[2]II. Tim. iv. 2: Insta opportune, importune: argue, obsecra, increpa in omni patientia et doctrina.

own unaided powers. Such easily fall into error, because, instead of fixing their gaze on God, first principle and last end of the whole universe, they fall back upon themselves, becoming attached exclusively to passing things of earth; and thus their restlessness will never cease till they direct their attention and their efforts to God, the goal of all perfection, according to the profound saying of St. Augustine: "Thou didst create us, O Lord, for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it rest in Thee."[3]

### Importance of Christian Education

It is therefore as important to make no mistake in education, as it is to make no mistake in the pursuit of the last end, with which the whole work of education is intimately and necessarily connected. In fact, since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence, since God has revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, Who alone is "the way, the truth and the life," there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education.

From this we see the supreme importance of Christian education, not merely for each individual, but for families and for the whole of human society, whose perfection comes from the perfection of the elements that compose it. From these same principles, the excellence, we may well call it the unsurpassed excellence, of the work of Christian education becomes manifest and clear; for after all it aims at securing the Supreme Good, that is, God, for the souls of those who are being educated, and the maximum of well-being possible here below for human society. And this it does as efficaciously as man is capable of doing it, namely by cooperating with God in the perfecting of individuals and of society, in as much as education makes upon the soul the first, the most powerful and lasting impression for life, according to the well-known saying of the Wise Man, "A young man according to his way, even when he is old, he will not depart from it."[4] With good reason therefore did St. John

[3] *Confess.* I, 1: Fecisti nos, Domine, ad Te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te.

[4] Prov. xxii. 6: Adolescens iuxta viam suam etiam cum senuerit non recedet ab ea.

Chrysostom say, "What greater work is there than training the mind and forming the habits of the young?"[5]

But nothing discloses to us the supernatural beauty and excellence of the work of Christian education better than the sublime expression of love of Our Blessed Lord, identifying Himself with children, "Whosoever shall receive one such child as this in My name, receiveth Me."[6]

Now in order that no mistake be made in this work of utmost importance, and in order to conduct it in the best manner possible with the help of God's grace, it is necessary to have a clear and definite idea of Christian education in its essential aspects, viz., who has the mission to educate, who are the subjects to be educated, what are the necessary accompanying circumstances, what is the end and object proper to Christian education according to God's established order in the economy of His Divine Providence.

## A Social Activity

Education is essentially a social and not a mere individual activity. Now there are three necessary societies distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.

In the first place comes the family, instituted directly by God for its peculiar purpose, the generation and formation of offspring; for this reason it has priority of nature and therefore of rights over civil society. Nevertheless, the family is an imperfect society, since it has not in itself all the means for its own complete development; whereas civil society is a perfect society, having in itself all the means for its peculiar end, which is the temporal well-being of the community; and so, in this respect, that is, in view of the common good, it has preëminence over the family, which finds its own suitable temporal perfection precisely in civil society.

The third society, into which man is born when through baptism he receives the divine life of grace, is the Church; a

[5] *Hom. 60, in c. 18 Matt.:* Quid maius quam animis moderari, quam adolescentulorum fingere mores?

[6] Mark ix. 36: Quisquis unum ex huiusmodi pueris receperit in nomine meo, me recipit.

society of the supernatural order and of universal extent; a perfect society, because it has in itself all the means required for its own end, which is the eternal salvation of mankind; hence it is supreme in its own domain.

Consequently, education which is concerned with man as a whole, individually and socially, in the order of nature and in the order of grace, necessarily belongs to all these three societies, in due proportion, corresponding, according to the disposition of Divine Providence, to the coördination of their respective ends.

## The Church

And first of all education belongs preëminently to the Church, by reason of a double title in the supernatural order, conferred exclusively upon her by God Himself; absolutely superior therefore to any other title in the natural order.

The first title is founded upon the express mission and supreme authority to teach given her by her Divine Founder: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."[7] Upon this magisterial office Christ conferred infallibility, together with the command to teach His doctrine. Hence the Church "was set by her Divine Author as the pillar and ground of truth, in order to teach the divine faith to men, and keep whole and inviolate the deposit confided to her; to direct and fashion men, in all their actions individually and socially, to purity of morals and integrity of life, in accordance with revealed doctrine."[8]

## Supernatural Motherhood

The second title is the supernatural motherhood, in virtue of which the Church, spotless spouse of Christ, generates, nur-

[7]Matt. xxviii. 18-20: Data est mihi omnis potestas in caelo et in terra. Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti: docentes eos servare omnia quaecumque mandavi vobis. Et ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem saeculi.

[8]Pius IX. Ep. *Quum non sine*, 14 Iul. 1864: Columna et firmamentum veritatis a Divino suo Auctore fuit constituta, ut omnes homines divinam edoceat fidem, eiusque depositum sibi traditum integrum inviolatumque custodiat, ac homines eorumque consortia et actiones ad morum honestatem vitaeque integritatem, iuxta revelatae doctrinae normam, dirigat et fingat.

tures and educates souls in the divine life of grace, with her Sacraments and her doctrine. With good reason then does St. Augustine maintain: "He has not God for father who refuses to have the Church as mother."[9]

Hence it is that in this proper object of her mission, that is, "in faith and morals, God Himself has made the Church sharer in the divine magisterium and, by a special privilege, granted her immunity from error; hence she is the mistress of men, supreme and absolutely sure, and she has inherent in herself an inviolable right to freedom in teaching."[10] By necessary consequence the Church is independent of any sort of earthly power as well in the origin as in exercise of her mission as educator, not merely in regard to her proper end and object, but also in regard to the means necessary and suitable to attain that end. Hence with regard to every other kind of human learning and instruction, which is the common patrimony of individuals and society, the Church has an independent right to make use of it, and above all to decide what may help or harm Christian education. And this must be so, because the Church as a perfect society has an independent right to the means conducive to its end, and because every form of instruction, no less than every human action, has a necessary connection with man's last end, and therefore cannot be withdrawn from the dictates of the divine law, of which the Church is guardian, interpreter and infallible mistress.

This truth is clearly set forth by Pius X of saintly memory: "Whatever a Christian does even in the order of things of earth, he may not overlook the supernatural; indeed, he must, according to the teaching of Christian wisdom, direct all things towards the supreme good as to his last end; all his actions, besides, in so far as good or evil in the order of morality, that is, in keeping or not with natural and divine law, fall under the judgment and jurisdiction of the Church."[11]

9*De Symbolo ad catech.*, XIII: Non habebit Deum patrem, qui Ecclesiam noluerit habere matrem.

10Ep. enc. *Libertas*, 20 Iun. 1888: in fide atque in institutione morum, divini magisterii Ecclesiam fecit Deus ipse participem, eamdemque divino eius beneficio falli nesciam: quare magistra mortalium est maxima ac tutissima, in eaque inest non violabile ius ad magisterrii libertatem.

11Ep. enc. *Singulari quadam*, 24 Sept. 1912: Quidquid homo christianus agat, etiam in ordine rerum terrenarum, non ei licet bona negligere quae sunt supra naturam, immo opportet ad summum bonum, tamquam ad ultimum finem, ex christianae sapientiae praescriptis omnia dirigat: omnes autem actiones eius, quatenus bonae aut malae sunt in genere morum id est cum iure naturali et divino congruunt aut discrepant, indicio et iurisdictioni Ecclesiae subsunt.

It is worthy of note how a layman, an excellent writer and at the same time a profound and conscientious thinker, has been able to understand well and express exactly this fundamental Catholic doctrine! "The Church does not say that morality belongs purely, in the sense of exclusively, to her; but that it belongs wholly to her. She has never maintained that outside her fold and apart from her teaching, man cannot arrive at any moral truth; she has on the contrary more than once condemned this opinion because it has appeared under more forms than one. She does however say, has said, and will ever say, that because of her institution by Jesus Christ, because of the Holy Ghost sent her in His Name by the Father, she alone possesses what she has had immediately from God and can never lose, the whole of moral truth, *omnem veritatem,* in which all individual moral truths are included, as well those which man may learn by the help of reason, as those which form part of revelation or which may be deduced from it."[12]

## The Rights of the Church

Therefore with full right the Church promotes letters, science, art, in so far as necessary or helpful to Christian education, in addition to her work for the salvation of souls; founding and maintaining schools and institutions adapted to every branch of learning and degree of culture.[13] Nor may even physical culture, as it is called, be considered outside the range of her maternal supervision, for the reason that it also is a means which may help or harm Christian education.

And this work of the Church in every branch of culture is of immense benefit to families and nations which without Christ are lost, as St. Hilary points out correctly: "What can be more fraught with danger for the world than the rejection of Christ?"[14] Nor does it interfere in the least with the regulations of the State, because the Church in her motherly prudence is not unwilling that her schools and institutions for the education of the laity be in keeping with the legitimate dispositions of civil authority; she is in every way ready to coöperate with this au-

12A. Manzoni, *Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica,* c. III.

13Codex Iuris Canonici, c. 1375.

14*Commentar, in Matt.* cap. 18: Quid mundo tam periculosum quam non recepisse Christum?

thority and to make provision for a mutual understanding, should difficulties arise.

Again it is the inalienable right as well as the indispensable duty of the Church, to watch over the entire education of her children, in all institutions, public or private, not merely in regard to the religious instruction there given, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation in so far as religion and morality are concerned.[15]

Nor should the exercise of this right be considered undue interference, but rather maternal care on the part of the Church in protecting her children from the grave danger of all kinds of doctrinal and moral evil. Moreover this watchfulness of the Church not merely can create no real inconvenience, but must on the contrary confer valuable assistance in the right ordering and well-being of families and of civil society; for it keeps far away from youth the moral poison which at that inexperienced and changeable age more easily penetrates the mind and more rapidly spreads its baneful effects. For it is true, as Leo XIII has wisely pointed out, that without proper religious and moral instruction "every form of intellectual culture will be injurious; for young people not accustomed to respect God, will be unable to bear the restraint of a virtuous life, and never having learned to deny themselves anything, they will easily be incited to disturb the public order."[16]

### The Church's Mission

The extent of the Church's mission in the field of education is such as to embrace every nation, without exception, according to the command of Christ: "Teach ye all nations;"[17] and there is no power on earth that may lawfully oppose her or stand in her way. In the first place, it extends over all the Faithful, of whom she has anxious care as a tender mother. For these she has throughout the centuries created and conducted an immense number of schools and institutions in every branch of learning. As we said on a recent occasion: "Right back in the far-off middle ages when there were so many (some have even

15Cod. I. C., cc 1381, 1382.

16Ep. enc. *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens.*, 8 Febr. 1884: male sana omnis futura est animarum cultura: insueti ad verecundiam Dei adolescentes nullam ferre poterunt honeste vivendi disciplinam, suisque cupiditatibus nihil unquam negare ausi, facile ad miscendas civitates pertrahentur.

17Matt. xxviii. 19: docete omnes gentes.

said too many) monasteries, convents, churches, collegiate-churches, Cathedral chapters, etc., there was attached to each a home of study, of teaching, of Christian education. To these we must add all the universities, spread over every country and always by the initiative and under the protection of the Holy See and the Church. That grand spectacle, which today we see better, as it is nearer to us and more imposing because of the conditions of the age, was the spectacle of all times; and they who study and compare historical events remain astounded at what the Church has been able to do in this matter, and marvel at the manner in which she has succeeded in fulfilling her God-given mission to educate generations of men to a Christian life, producing everywhere a magnificent harvest of fruitful results. But if we wonder that the Church in all times has been able to gather about her and educate hundreds, thousand, millions of students, no less wonderful is it to bear in mind what she has done not only in the field of education, but in that also of true and genuine erudition. For, if so many treasures of culture, civilization and literature have escaped destruction, this is due to the action by which the Church, even in times long past and uncivilized, has shed so bright a light in the domain of letters, of philosophy, of art, and in a special manner of architecture."[18]

All this the Church has been able to do because her mission to educate extends equally to those outside the fold, seeing that all men are called to enter the kingdom of God and reach eternal salvation. Just as today when her Missions scatter schools by the thousand in districts and countries not yet Christian, from the banks of the Ganges to the Yellow River and the great islands and archipelagos of the Pacific Ocean, from the Dark Continent to the Land of Fire and to frozen Alaska, so in every age the Church by her missionaries has educated to Christian life and to civilization the various peoples which now constitute the Christian nations of the civilized world.

Hence it is evident that both by right and in fact the mission to educate belongs preëminently to the Church, and that no one free from prejudice can have a reasonable motive for opposing or impeding the Church in this her work, of which the world today enjoys the precious advantages.

18Discourse to the students of Mondragone College, May 14, 1929.

## The Family and the State

This is the more true because the rights of the family and of the State, even the rights of individuals regarding a just liberty in the pursuit of science, of methods of science and all sorts of profane culture, not only are not opposed to this preëminence of the Church, but are in complete harmony with it. The fundamental reason for this harmony is that the supernatural order, to which the Church owes her rights, not only does not in the least destroy the natural order, to which pertain the other rights mentioned, but elevates the natural and perfects it, each affording mutual aid to the other, and completing it in a manner proportioned to its respective nature and dignity. The reason is because both come from God, Who cannot contradict Himself: "The works of God are perfect and all His ways are judgment."[19]

This becomes clearer when we consider more closely and in detail the mission of education proper to the family and to the State.

## The Family

In the first place the Church's mission of education is in wonderful agreement with that of the family, for both proceed from God, and in a remarkably similar manner. God directly communicates to the family, in the natural order, fecundity, which is the principle of life, and hence also the principle of education to life, together with authority, the principle of order.

The Angelic Doctor with his wonted clearness of thought and precision of style, says: "The father according to the flesh has in a particular way a share in that principle which in a manner universal is found in God. . . . The father is the principle of generation, of education and discipline and of everything that bears upon the perfecting of human life."[20]

The family therefore holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil society and of the State, and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth.

That this right is inviolable St. Thomas proves as follows:

[19]Deut. xxxii. 4: Dei perfecta sunt opera, et omnes viae eius iudicia.

[20]S. Th., 2-2, Q. CII, a. 1: Carnalis pater particulariter participat rationem principii quae universaliter invenitur in Deo. . . . Pater est principium et generationis et educationis et disciplinae, et omnium quae ad perfectionem humanae vitae pertinent.

"The child is naturally something of the father . . . so by natural right the child, before reaching the use of reason, is under the father's care. Hence it would be contrary to natural justice if the child, before the use of reason, were removed from the care of its parents, or if any disposition were made concerning him against the will of the parents."[21] And as this duty on the part of the parents continues up to the time when the child is in a position to provide for himself, this same inviolable parental right of education also endures. "Nature intends not merely the generation of the offspring, but also its development and advance to the perfection of man considered as man, that is, to the state of virtue"[22] says the same St. Thomas.

The wisdom of the Church in this matter is expressed with precision and clearness in the Codex of Canon Law, can. 1113: "Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children, as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well-being."[23]

On this point the common sense of mankind is in such complete accord, that they would be in open contradiction with it who dared maintain that the children belong to the State before they belong to the family, and that the State has an absolute right over their education. Untenable is the reason they adduce, namely that man is born a citizen and hence belongs primarily to the State, not bearing in mind that before being a citizen man must exist; and existence does not come from the State, but from the parents, as Leo XIII wisely declared: "The children are something of the father, and as it were an extension of the person of the father; and, to be perfectly accurate, they enter into and become part of civil society, not directly by themselves, but through the family in which they were born."[24]

21S. Th., 2-2, Q. X. a. 12: Filius enim naturaliter est aliquid patris . . .: ita de iure naturali est quod filius, antequam habeat usum rationis, sit sub cura patris. Unde contra iustitiam naturalem esset, si puer, antequam habeat usum rationis, a cura parentum subtrahatur, vel de eo aliquid ordinetur invitis parentibus.

22Suppl. S. Th. 3. p. Q. 41, a. 1: Non enim intendit natura solum generationem prolis, sed etiam traductionem et promotionem usque ad perfectum statum hominis in quantum homo est, qui est virtutis status.

23Cod. I. C., c. 1113: Parentes gravissima obligatione tenentur prolis educationem tum religiosam et moralem, tum physicam et civilem pro viribus curandi, et etiam temporali eorum bono providendi.

24Ep. enc. *Rerum novarum,* 15 Maii 1891: Filii sunt aliquid patris, et velut paternae amplificatio quaedam personae proprieque loqui si volumus, non ipsi per se, sed per communitatem domesticam, in qua generati sunt, civilem ineunt ac participant societatem.

"And therefore," says the same Leo XIII, "the father's power is of such a nature that it cannot be destroyed or absorbed by the State; for it has the same origin as human life itself."[25]

## Not Despotic

It does not follow from this that the parents' right to educate their children is absolute and despotic; for it is necessarily subordinated to the last end and to natural and divine law, as Leo XIII declares in another memorable Encyclical, where he thus sums up the rights and duties of parents: "By nature parents have a right to the training of their children, but with this added duty that the education and instruction of the child be in accord with the end for which by God's blessing it was begotten. Therefore it is the duty of parents to make every effort to prevent any invasion of their rights in this matter, and to make absolutely sure that the education of their children remains under their own control in keeping with their Christian duty, and above all to refuse to send them to those schools in which there is danger of imbibing the deadly poison of impiety."[26]

It must be borne in mind also that the obligation of the family to bring up children, includes not only religious and moral education, but physical and civic education as well,[27] principally in so far as it touches upon religion and morality.

This incontestable right of the family has at various times been recognized by nations anxious to respect the natural law in their civil enactments. Thus, to give one recent example, the Supreme Court of the United States of North America, in a decision on an important controversy, declared that it is not in the competence of the State to fix any uniform standard of education by forcing children to receive instruction exclusively in public schools, and it bases its decision on the natural law: the child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and

25Ep. enc. *Rerum novarum,* 15 Maii 1891: Patris potestas est eiusmodi, ut nec extingui, neque absorberi a republica possit, quia idem et commune habet cum ipsa hominum vita principium.

26Ep. enc. *Sapientiae christianae,* 10 Ian. 1890: Natura parentes habent ius suum instituendi, quos procrearint, hoc adiuncto officio, ut cum fine, cuius gratia sobolem Dei beneficio susceperunt, ipsa educatio conveniat et doctrina puerilis. Igitur parentibus est necessarium eniti et contendere, ut omnem in hoc genere propulsent iniuriam, omninoque pervincant ut sua in potestate sit educere liberos, uti par est, more christiano, maximeque prohibere scholis iis, a quibus periculum est ne malum venenum imbibant impietatis.

27Cod. I. C., c. 1113.

direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty, to educate him and prepare him for the fulfilment of his obligations.[28]

### Tutelage of the Church

History bears witness how, particularly in modern times, the State has violated and does violate rights conferred by God on the family. At the same time it shows magnificently how the Church has ever protected and defended these rights, a fact proved by the special confidence which parents have in Catholic schools. As We pointed out recently in Our letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State: "The family has instinctively understood this to be so, and from the earliest days of Christianity down to our own times, fathers and mothers, even those of little or no faith, have been sending or bringing their children in millions to places of education under the direction of the Church."[29]

It is paternal instinct, given by God, that thus turns with confidence to the Church, certain of finding in her the protection of family rights, thereby illustrating that harmony with which God has ordered all things. The Church is indeed conscious of her divine mission to all mankind, and of the obligation which all men have to practise the one true religion; and therefore she never tires of defending her right, and of reminding parents of their duty, to have all Catholic-born children baptized and brought up as Christians. On the other hand so jealous is she of the family's inviolable natural right to educate the children, that she never consents, save under peculiar circumstances and with special cautions, to baptize the children of infidels, or provide for their education against the will of the parents, till such time as the children can choose for themselves and freely embrace the faith.[30]

We have therefore two facts of supreme importance, as We said in our discourse cited above: The Church placing at the disposal of families her office of mistress and educator, and the families eager to profit by the offer, and entrusting their children

28"The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right coupled with the high duty, to recognize, and prepare him for additional duties." U. S. Supreme Court Decesion in the Oregon School Case, June 1, 1925.

29Letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State, May 30, 1929.

30Cod. I. C., c. 750, § 2. S. Th., 2, 2. O. X, a. 12.

to the Church in hundreds and thousands. These two facts recall and proclaim a striking truth of the greatest significance in the moral and social order. They declare that the mission of education regards before all, above all, primarily the Church and the family, and this by natural and divine law, and that therefore it cannot be slighted, cannot be evaded, cannot be supplanted.[31]

## State Rights

From such priority of rights on the part of the Church and of the family in the field of education, most important advantages, as we have seen, accrue to the whole of society. Moreover in accordance with the divinely established order of things, no damage can follow from it to the true and just rights of the State in regard to the education of its citizens.

These rights have been conferred upon civil society by the Author of nature Himself, not by title of fatherhood, as in the case of the Church and of the family, but in virtue of the authority which it possesses to promote the common temporal welfare, which is precisely the purpose of its existence. Consequently education cannot pertain to civil society in the same way in which it pertains to the Church and to the family, but in a different way corresponding to its own particular end and object.

Now this end and object, the common welfare in the temporal order, consists in that peace and security in which families and individual citizens have the free exercise of their rights, and at the same time enjoy the greatest spiritual and temporal prosperity possible in this life, by the mutual union and coördination of the work of all. The function therefore of the civil authority residing in the State is twofold, to protect and to foster, but by no means to absorb the family and the individual, or to substitute itself for them.

Accordingly in the matter of education, it is the right, or to speak more correctly, it is the duty of the State to protect in its legislation, the prior rights, already described, of the family as regards the Christian education of its offspring, and consequently also to respect the supernatural rights of the Church in this same realm of Christian education.

It also belongs to the State to protect the rights of the child itself when the parents are found wanting either physically or

31Discourse to the students of Mondragone College, May 14, 1929.

morally in this respect, whether by default, incapacity, or misconduct, since, as has been shown, their right to educate is not an absolute and despotic one, but dependent on the natural and divine law, and therefore subject alike to the authority and jurisdiction of the Church, and to the vigilance and administrative care of the State in view of the common good. Besides, the family is not a perfect society, that is, it has not in itself all the means necessary for its full development. In such cases, exceptional no doubt, the State does not put itself in the place of the family, but merely supplies deficiencies, and provides suitable means, always in conformity with the natural rights of the child and the supernatural rights of the Church.

In general then it is the right and duty of the State to protect, according to the rules of right reason and faith, the moral and religious education of youth, by removing public impediments that stand in the way.

### Instruction of Youth

In the first place it pertains to the State, in view of the common good, to promote in various ways the education and instruction of youth. It should begin by encouraging and assisting, of its own accord, the initiative and activity of the Church and the family, whose successes in this field have been clearly demonstrated by history and experience. It should moreover supplement their work whenever this falls short of what is necessary, even by means of its own schools and institutions. For the State more than any other society is provided with the means put at its disposal for the needs of all, and it is only right that it use these means to the advantage of those who have contributed them.[32]

Over and above this, the State can exact, and take measures to secure that all its citizens have the necessary knowledge of their civic and political duties, and a certain degree of physical, intellectual and moral culture, which, considering the conditions of our times, is really necessary for the common good.

However it is clear that in all these ways of promoting education and instruction, both public and private, the State should respect the inherent rights of the Church and of the family concerning Christian education, and moreover have regard for dis-

[32]Discourse to the students of Mondragone College, May 14, 1929.

tributive justice. Accordingly, unjust and unlawful is any monopoly, educational or scholastic, which, physically or morally, forces families to make use of government schools, contrary to the dictates of their Christian conscience, or contrary even to their legitimate preferences.

### Civic Education

This does not prevent the State from making due provision for the right administration of public affairs and for the protection of its peace, within or without the realm. These are things which directly concern the public good and call for special aptitudes and special preparation. The State may therefore reserve to itself the establishment and direction of schools intended to prepare for certain civic duties and especially for military service, provided it be careful not to injure the rights of the Church or of the family in what pertains to them. It is well to repeat this warning here; for in these days there is spreading a spirit of nationalism which is false and exaggerated, as well as dangerous to true peace and prosperity. Under its influence various excesses are committed in giving a military turn to the so-called physical training of boys (sometimes even of girls, contrary to the very instincts of human nature); or again in usurping unreasonably on Sunday, the time which should be devoted to religious duties and to family life at home. It is not our intention however to condemn what is good in the spirit of discipline and legitimate bravery promoted by these methods: We condemn only what is excessive, as for example violence, which must not be confounded with courage nor with the noble sentiment of military valor in defense of country and public order; or again exaltation of athleticism which even in classic pagan times marked the decline and downfall of genuine physical training.

In general also it belongs to civil society and the State to provide what may be called civic education, not only for its youth, but for all ages and classes. This consists in the practise of presenting publicly to groups of individuals information having an intellectual, imaginative and emotional appeal, calculated to draw their wills to what is upright and honest, and to urge its practise by a sort of moral compulsion, positively by disseminating such knowledge, and negatively by suppressing what is op-

posed to it.[33] This civic education, so wide and varied in itself as to include almost every activity of the State intended for the public good, ought also to be regulated by the norms of rectitude, and therefore cannot conflict with the doctrines of the Church, which is the divinely appointed teacher of these norms.

### Church and State

All that we have said so far regarding the activity of the State in educational matters, rests on the solid and immovable foundation of the Catholic doctrine of The Christian Constitution of States set forth in such masterly fashion by Our Predecessor Leo XIII, notably in the Encyclicals *Immortale Dei* and *Sapientiae Christianae*. He writes as follows: "God has divided the government of the human race between two authorities, ecclesiastical and civil, establishing one over things divine, the other over things human. Both are supreme, each in its own domain; each has its own fixed boundaries which limit its activities. These boundaries are determined by the peculiar nature and the proximate end of each, and describe as it were a sphere within which, with exclusive right, each may develop its influence. As however the same subjects are under the two authorities, it may happen that the same matter, though from a different point of view, may come under the competence and jurisdiction of each of them. It follows that Divine Providence, whence both authorities have their origin, must have traced with due order the proper line of action for each. The powers that are, are ordained of God."[34]

Now the education of youth is precisely one of those matters that belong both to the Church and to the State, "though in different ways," as explained above. "Therefore," continues Leo XIII, "between the two powers there must reign a well ordered harmony. Not without reason may this mutual agreement be compared to the union of body and soul in man. Its nature

33P. L. Taparelli, *Saggio teor. di Diritto Naturale*, n. 922; a work never sufficiently praised and recommended to university students (Cfr. Our Discourse of Dec. 18, 1927).

34Ep. enc. *Immortale Dei*, 1 Nov. 1885: Deus humani generis procurationem inter duas potestates partitus est, scilicet ecclesiasticam et civilem, alteram quidem divinis, alteram humanis rebus praepositam. Utraque est in suo genere maxima: habet utraque certos, quibus contineatur, terminos, eosque sua cuiusque natura causaque proxime definitos: unde aliquis velut orbis circumscribitur, inquo sua cuiusque actio iure proprio versetur. Sed quia utriusque imperium est in eosdem, cum usuvenire possit, ut res una atque eadem quamquam aliter atque aliter, sed tamen eadem res, ad utriusque ius iudiciumque pertineat, debet providentissimus Deus, a quo sunt ambae constitutae, utriusque itinera recte atque ordine composuisse. Quae autem sunt, a Deo ordinatae sunt (Rom. xiii. 1).

and extent can only be determined by considering, as we have said, the nature of each of the two powers, and in particular the excellence and nobility of the respective ends. One is committed directly and specifically the charge of what is helpful in worldly matters; while the other is to concern itself with the things that pertain to heaven and eternity. Everything therefore in human affairs that is in any way sacred, or has reference to the salvation of souls and the worship of God, whether by its nature or by its end, is subject to the jurisdiction and discipline of the Church. Whatever else is comprised in the civil and political order, rightly comes under the authority of the State; for Christ commanded us to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."[35]

Whoever refuses to admit these principles, and hence to apply them to education, must necessarily deny that Christ has founded His Church for the eternal salvation of mankind, and maintain instead that civil society and the State are not subject to God and to His law, natural and divine. Such a doctrine is manifestly impious, contrary to right reason, and, especially in this matter of education, extremely harmful to the proper training of youth, and disastrous as well for civil society as for the well-being of all mankind. On the other hand from the application of these principles, there inevitably result immense advantages for the right formation of citizens. This is abundantly proved by the history of every age. Tertullian in his *Apologeticus* could throw down a challenge to the enemies of the Church in the early days of Christianity, just as St. Augustine did in his; and we today can repeat with him, "Let those who declare the teaching of Christ to be opposed to the welfare of the State, furnish us with an army of soldiers such as Christ says soldiers ought to be; let them give us subjects, husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, kings, judges, taxpayers and taxgatherers who

35Ep. enc. *Immortale Dei,* 1 Nov. 1885: Itaque inter utramque potestatem quaedam intercedat necesse est ordinata colligatio: quae quidem coniunctioni non immerito comparatur, per quam anima et corpus in homine copulantur. Qualis autem et quanta ea sit, aliter iudicari non potest, nisi respiciendo, uti diximus, ad utriusque naturam, habendaque ratione excellentiae et nobilitatis causarum; cum alteri proxime maximeque propositum sit rerum mortalium curare commoda, alteri caelestia ac sempiterna bona comparare. Quidquid igitur est in rebus humanis quoquo modo sacrum, quidquid ad salutem animorum cultumve Dei pertinet, sive tale illud sit natura sua, sive rursus tale intelligatur propter causam ad quam refertur, id est omne in potestate arbitrioque Ecclesiae: cetera vero, quae civile et politicum genus complectitur, rectum est civili auctoritati esse subiecta, cum Iesus Christus iusserit, quae Caesaris sint, reddi Caesari, quae Dei, Deo.

live up to the teachings of Christ; and then let them dare assert that Christian doctrine is harmful to the State. Rather let them not hesitate one moment to acclaim that doctrine, rightly observed, the greatest safeguard of the State."[36]

While treating of education, it is not out of place to show here how an ecclesiastical writer, who flourished in more recent times, during the Renaissance, the holy and learned Cardinal Silvio Antoniano, to whom the cause of Christian education is greatly indebted, has set forth most clearly this well established point of Catholic doctrine. He had been a disciple of that wonderful educator of youth, St. Philip Neri; he was teacher and Latin secretary to St. Charles Borromeo, and it was at the latter's suggestion and under his inspiration that he wrote his splendid treatise on *The Christian Education of Youth.* In it he argues as follows:

### True Harmony

"The more closely the temporal power of a nation aligns itself with the spiritual, and the more it fosters and promotes the latter, by so much the more it contributes to the conservation of the commonwealth. For it is the aim of the ecclesiastical authority by the use of spiritual means, to form good Christians in accordance with its own particular end and object; and in doing this it helps at the same time to form good citizens, and prepares them to meet their obligations as members of a civil society. This follows of necessity because in the City of God, the Holy Roman Catholic Church, a good citizen and an upright man are absolutely one and the same thing. How grave therefore is the error of those who separate things so closely united, and who think that they can produce good citizens by ways and methods other than those which make for the formation of good Christians. For, let human prudence say what it likes and reason as it pleases, it is impossible to produce true temporal peace and tranquillity by things repugnant or opposed to the peace and happiness of eternity."[37]

What is true of the State, is true also of science, scientific

[36] *Ep. 138:* Proinde qui doctrinam Christi adversam dicunt esse reipublicae, dent exercitum talem, quales doctrinas Christi esse milites iussit; dent tales provinciales, tales maritos, tales coniuges, tales parentes, tales filios, tales dominos, tales servos, tales reges, talesiudices, tales denique debitorum ipsius fisci redditores et exactores, quales esse praecipit doctrina christiana, et audeant eam dicere adversam esse reipublicae, ima vero non dubitent eam confiteri magnam si obtemperetur, salutem esse reiublicae.

[37] *Dell'educaz. crist.*, lib. I, c. 43.

methods and scientific research; they have nothing to fear from the full and perfect mandate which the Church holds in the field of education. Our Catholic institutions, whatever their grade in the educational and scientific world, have no need of apology. The esteem they enjoy, the praise they receive, the learned works which they promote and produce in such abundance, and above all, the men, fully and splendidly equipped, whom they provide for the magistracy, for the professions, for the teaching career, in fact for every walk of life, more than sufficiently testify in their favor.[38]

These facts moreover present a most striking confirmation of the Catholic doctrine defined by the Vatican Council: "Not only is it impossible for faith and reason to be at variance with each other, they are on the contrary of mutual help. For while right reason establishes the foundations of faith, and, by the help of its light, develops a knowledge of the things of God, faith on the other hand frees and preserves reason from error and enriches it with varied knowledge. The Church therefore, far from hindering the pursuit of the arts and sciences, fosters and promotes them in many ways. For she is neither ignorant nor unappreciative of the many advantages which flow from them to mankind. On the contrary she admits that just as they come from God, Lord of all knowledge, so too if rightly used, with the help of His grace they lead to God. Nor does she prevent sciences, each in its own sphere, from making use of principles and methods of their own. Only while acknowledging the freedom due to them, she takes every precaution to prevent them from falling into error by opposition to divine doctrine, or from overstepping their proper limits, and thus invading and disturbing the domain of faith."[39]

This norm of a just freedom in things scientific, serves also as an inviolable norm of a just freedom in things didactic, or for

[38]Letter to the Cardinal Secretary of State, May 30, 1929.

[39]Conc. Vat., Sess. 3, cap. 4. Neque solum fides et ratio inter se dissidere nunquam possunt, sed opem quoque sibi mutuam ferunt, cum recta ratio fidei fundamenta demonstret eiusque lumine illustrata rerum divinarum scientiam excolat, fides vero rationem ab erroribus liberet ac tueatur eamque multiplici cognitione instruat. Quapropter tantum abest, ut Ecclesia humanarum artium et disciplinarium culturae obsistat, ut hanc multis modis invet atque promoveat. Non enim commoda ab iis ad hominum vitam dimanantia aut ignorat aut despicit; fatetur immo, eas, quemadmodum a Deo scientiarum Domino profectae sunt, ita, si rite pertractentur, ad Deum iuvante eius gratia perducere. Nec sane ipsa vetat, ne huiusmodi disciplinae in suo quaeque ambitu propriis utantur principiis et propria methodo; sed iustam hanc libertatem agnoscens, id sedulo cavet, ne divinae doctrinae repugnando errores in se suscipiant, aut fines proprios transgressae ea, quae sunt fidei, occupent et perturbent.

rightly understood liberty in teaching; it should be observed therefore in what ever instruction is imparted to others. Its obligation is all the more binding in justice when there is question of instructing youth. For in this work the teacher, whether public or private, has no absolute right of his own, but only such as has been communicated to him by others. Besides every Christian child or youth has a strict right to instruction in harmony with the teaching of the Church, the pillar and ground of truth. And whoever disturbs the pupil's faith in any way, does him grave wrong, inasmuch as he abuses the trust which children place in their teachers, and takes unfair advantage of their inexperience and of their natural craving for unrestrained liberty, at once illusory and false.

### Subject of Education

In fact it must never be forgotten that the subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties natural and supernatural, such as right reason and revelation show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original estate, but redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God, though without the preternatural privileges of bodily immortality or perfect control of appetite. There remain therefore, in human nature the effects of original sin, the chief of which are weakness of will and disorderly inclinations.

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child and the rod of correction shall drive it away."[40] Disorderly inclinations then must be corrected, good tendencies encouraged and regulated from tender childhood, and above all the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth and by the means of grace, without which it is impossible to control evil impulses, impossible to attain to the full and complete perfection of education intended by the Church, which Christ has endowed so richly with divine doctrine and with the Sacraments, the efficacious means of grace.

### False Naturalism

Hence every form of pedagogic naturalism which in any way excludes or weakens supernatural Christian formation in the

40Prov. xxii. 15: Stultitia colligata est in corde pueri: et virga disciplinae fugabit eam.

teaching of youth, is false. Every method of education founded, wholly or in part, on the denial or forgetfulness of original sin and of grace, and relying on the sole powers of human nature, is unsound. Such, generally speaking, are those modern systems bearing various names which appeal to a pretended self-government and unrestrained freedom on the part of the child, and which diminish or even suppress the teacher's authority and action, attributing to the child an exclusive primacy of initiative, and an activity independent of any higher law, natural or divine, in the work of his education.

If any of these terms are used, less properly to denote the necessity of a gradually more active coöperation on the part of the pupil in his own education, if the intention is to banish from education despotism and violence, which, by the way, just punishment is not, this would be correct, but in no way new. It would mean only what has been taught and reduced to practise by the Church in traditional Christian education, in imitation of the method employed by God Himself towards His creatures, of whom He demands active coöperation according to the nature of each; for His Wisdom "reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly."[41]

But alas! It is clear from the obvious meaning of the words and from experience, that what is intended by not a few, is the withdrawal of education from every sort of dependence on the divine law. So today we see, strange sight indeed, educators and philosophers who spend their lives in searching for a universal moral code of education, as if there existed no decalogue, no gospel law, no law even of nature stamped by God on the heart of man, promulgated by right reason, and codified in positive revelation by God Himself in the ten commandments. These innovators are wont to refer contemptuously to Christian education as "heteronomous," "passive," "obsolete," because founded upon the authority of God and His holy law.

Such men are miserably deluded in their claim to emancipate, as they say, the child, while in reality they are making him the slave of his own blind pride and of his disorderly affections, which, as a logical consequence of this false system, come to be justified as legitimate demands of a so-called autonomous nature.

41Sap. VIII, 1: attingit a fine usque ad finem fortiter, et disponit omnia suaviter.

But what is worse is the claim, not only vain but false, irreverent and dangerous, to submit to research, experiment and conclusions of a purely natural and profane order, those matters of education which belong to the supernatural order; as for example questions of priestly or religious vocation, and in general the secret workings of grace which indeed elevate the natural powers, but are infinitely superior to them, and may nowise be subjected to physical laws, for "the Spirit breatheth where He will."[42]

### Sex-Instruction

Another grave danger is that naturalism which nowadays invades the field of education in that most delicate matter of purity of morals. Far too common is the error of those who with dangerous assurance and under an ugly term propagate a so-called sex-education, falsely imagining they can forearm youth against the dangers of sensuality by means purely natural, such as a foolhardy initiation and precautionary instruction for all indiscriminately, even in public; and, worse still, by exposing them at an early age to the occasions, in order to accustom them, so it is argued, and as it were to harden them against such dangers.

Such persons grievously err in refusing to recognize the inborn weakness of human nature, and the law of which the Apostle speaks, fighting against the law of mind;[43] and also in ignoring the experience of facts, from which it is clear that, particularly in young people, evil practises are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace.

In this extremely delicate matter, if, all things considered, some private instruction is found necessary and opportune, from those who hold from God the commission to teach and who have the grace of state, every precaution must be taken. Such precautions are well known in traditional Christian education, and are adequately described by Antoniano cited above, when he says:

"Such is our misery and inclination to sin, that often in the very things considered to be remedies against sin, we find occasions for and inducements to sin itself. Hence it is of the

42Io., III, 8; Spiritus ubi vult spirat. 43Rom. vii. 23.

highest importance that a good father, while discussing with his son a matter so delicate, should be well on his guard and not descend to details, nor refer to the various ways in which this infernal hydra destroys with its poison so large a portion of the world; otherwise it may happen that instead of extinguishing this fire, he unwittingly stirs or kindles it in the simple and tender heart of the child. Speaking generally, during the period of childhood it suffices to employ those remedies which produce the double effect of opening the door to the virtue of purity and closing the door upon vice."[44]

## Co-Education

False also and harmful to Christian education is the so-called method of "co-education." This too, by many of its supporters, is founded upon naturalism and the denial of original sin; but by all, upon a deplorable confusion of ideas that mistakes a levelling promiscuity and equality, for the legitimate association of the sexes. The Creator has ordained and disposed perfect union of the sexes only in matrimony, and, with varying degrees of contact, in the family and in society. Besides there is not in nature itself, which fashions the two quite different in organism, in temperament, in abilities, anything to suggest that there can be or ought to be promiscuity, and much less equality, in the training of the two sexes. These in keeping with the wonderful designs of the Creator are destined to complement each other in the family and in society, precisely because of their differences, which therefore ought to be maintained and encouraged during their years of formation, with the necessary distinction and corresponding separation, according to age and circumstances. These principles, with due regard to time and place, must in accordance with Christian prudence, be applied to all schools, particularly in the most delicate and decisive period of formation, that, namely, of adolescence; and in gymnastic exercises and deportment, special care must be had of Christian modesty in young women and girls, which is so gravely impaired by any kind of exhibition in public.

Recalling the terrible words of the Divine Master: "Woe to the world because of scandals!"[45] We most earnestly appeal to

44Silvio Antonio, *Dell'educazione cristiana dei figliuoli.*, lib. II, c. 88.
45Matt. xviii. 7: Vae mundo a scandalis!

your solicitude and your watchfulness, Venerable Brethren, against these pernicious errors, which, to the immense harm of youth, are spreading far and wide among Christian people.

In order to obtain perfect education, it is of the utmost importance to see that all those conditions which surround the child during the period of his formation, in other words that the combination of circumstances which we call environment, correspond exactly to the end proposed.

### The Christian Family

The first natural and necessary element in this environment, as regards education, is the family, and this precisely because so ordained by the Creator Himself. Accordingly that education, as a rule, will be more effective and lasting which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family; and more efficacious in proportion to the clear and constant good example set, first by the parents, and then by the other members of the household.

It is not our intention to treat formally the question of domestic education, nor even to touch upon its principal points. The subject is too vast. Besides there are not lacking special treatises on this topic by authors, both ancient and modern, well known for their solid Catholic doctrine. One which seems deserving of special mention is the golden treatise already referred to, of Antoniano, on *The Christian Education of Youth,* which St. Charles Borromeo ordered to be read in public to parents assembled in their churches.

Nevertheless, Venerable Brethren and beloved children, We wish to call your attention in a special manner to the present-day lamentable decline in family education. The offices and professions of a transitory and earthly life, which are certainly of far less importance, are prepared for by long and careful study; whereas for the fundamental duty and obligation of educating their children, many parents have little or no preparation, immersed as they are in temporal cares. The declining influence of domestic environment is further weakened by another tendency, prevalent almost everywhere today, which, under one pretext or another, for economic reasons, or for reasons of industry, trade or politics, causes children to be more and more frequently sent away from home even in their tenderest years.

And there is a country where the children are actually being torn from the bosom of the family, to be formed (or, to speak more accurately, to be deformed and depraved), in godless schools and associations, to irreligion and hatred, according to the theories of advanced socialism; and thus is renewed in a real and more terrible manner the slaughter of the Innocents.

### Obligation of Parents

For the love of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, therefore, We implore pastors of souls, by every means in their power, by instructions and catechisms, by word of mouth and written articles widely distributed, to warn Christian parents of their grave obligations. And this should be done not in a merely theoretical and general way, but with practical and specific application to the various responsibilities of parents touching the religious, moral and civil training of their children, and with indication of the methods best adapted to make their training effective, supposing always the influence of their own exemplary lives. The Apostle of the Gentiles did not hesitate to descend to such details of practical instruction in his epistles, especially in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where among other things he gives this advice: "And you, fathers, provoke not your children to anger."[46] This fault is the result not so much of excessive severity, as of impatience and of ignorance of means best calculated to effect a desired correction; it is also due to the all too common relaxation of parental discipline which fails to check the growth of evil passions in the hearts of the younger generation. Parents therefore, and all who take their place in the work of education, should be careful to make right use of the authority given them by God, whose vicars in a true sense they are. This authority is not given for their own advantage, but for the proper upbringing of their children in a holy and filial "fear of God, the beginning of wisdom," on which foundation alone all respect for authority can rest securely; and without which, order, tranquillity and prosperity, whether in the family or in society, will be impossible.

46Eph. vi. 4: Patres, nolite ad iracundiam provocare filios vestros.

## Educational Environment

To meet the weakness of man's fallen nature, God in His Goodness has provided the abundant helps of His grace and the countless means with which He has endowed the Church, the great family of Christ. The Church therefore is the educational environment most intimately and harmoniously associated with the Christian family.

This educational environment of the Church embraces the Sacraments, divinely efficacious means of grace, the sacred ritual, so wonderfully instructive, and the material fabric of her churches, whose liturgy and art have an immense educational value; but it also includes the great number and variety of schools, associations and institutions of all kinds, established for the training of youth in Christian piety, together with literature and the sciences, not omitting recreation and physical culture. And in this inexhaustible fecundity of educational works, how marvelous, how incomparable is the Church's maternal providence! So admirable too is the harmony which she maintains with the Christian family, that the Church and the family may be said to constitute together one and the same temple of Christian education.

## The School

Since however the younger generations must be trained in the arts and sciences for the advantage and prosperity of civil society, and since the family itself is unequal to this task, it was necessary to create that social institution, the school. But let it be borne in mind that this institution owes its existence to the initiative of the family and of the Church, long before it was undertaken by the State. Hence considered in its historical origin, the school is by its very nature an institution subsidiary and complementary to the family and to the Church. It follows logically and necessarily that it must not be in opposition to, but in positive accord with those other two elements, and form with them a perfect moral union, constituting one sanctuary of education, as it were, with the family and the Church. Otherwise it is doomed to fail of its purpose, and to become instead an agent of destruction.

This principle we find recognized by a layman, famous for

his pedagogical writings, though these because of their liberalism cannot be unreservedly praised. "The school," he writes, "if not a temple, is a den." And again: "When literary, social, domestic and religious education do not go hand in hand, man is unhappy and helpless."[47]

From this it follows that the so-called "neutral" or "lay" school, from which religion is excluded, is contrary to the fundamental principles of education. Such a school moreover cannot exist in practise; it is bound to become irreligious. There is no need to repeat what Our Predecessors have declared on this point, especially Pius IX and Leo XIII, at times when laicism was beginning in a special manner to infest the public school.

We renew and confirm their declarations,[48] as well as the Sacred Canons in which the frequenting of non-Catholic schools, whether neutral or mixed, those namely which are open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike, is forbidden for Catholic children, and can be at most tolerated, on the approval of the Ordinary alone, under determined circumstances of place and time, and with special precautions.[49] Neither can Catholics admit that other type of mixed school (least of all the so-called "ecole unique," obligatory on all), in which the students are provided with separate religious instruction, but receive other lessons in common with non-Catholic pupils from non-Catholic teachers.

## The Catholic School

For the mere fact that a school gives some religious instruction (often extremely stinted), does not bring it into accord with the rights of the Church and of the Christian family, or make it a fit place for Catholic students. To be this, it is necessary that all the teaching and the whole organization of the school, and its teachers, syllabus and text-books in every branch, be regulated by the Christian spirit, under the direction and maternal supervision of the Church; so that religion may be in very truth the foundation and crown of the youth's entire training; and this in every grade of school, not only the elementary,

47Nic. Tommaseo, *Pensieri sull'educazione*, Parte I, 3, 6.

48Pius IX, Ep. *Quum non sine*, 14 Iul. 1864.—Syllabus, Prop. 48.—Leo XIII, alloc. *Summi Pontificatus*, 20 Aug. 1880, Ep. enc. *Nobilissima*, 8 Febr. 1884, Ep. enc. *Quod multum*, 22 Aug. 1886, Ep. *Officio sanctissimo*, 22 Dec. 1887, Ep. enc. *Caritatis*, 19 Mart. 1894, etc. (Cfr. Cod. I. C. cum Fontium Annot., c. 1374).

49Cod. I. C., c. 1374.

but the intermediate and the higher institutions of learning as well. To use the words of Leo XIII: "It is necessary not only that religious instruction be given to the young at certain fixed times, but also that every other subject taught, be permeated with Christian piety. If this is wanting, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade and warm the hearts of masters and scholars alike, little good can be expected from any kind of learning, and considerable harm will often be the consequence."[50]

And let no one say that in a nation where there are different religious beliefs, it is impossible to provide for public instruction otherwise than by neutral or mixed schools. In such a case it becomes the duty of the State, indeed it is the easier and more reasonable method of procedure, to leave free scope to the initiative of the Church and family, while giving them such assistance as justice demands. That this can be done to the full satisfaction of families, and to the advantage of education and of public peace and tranquillity, is clear from the actual experience of some countries compromising different religious denominations. There the school legislation respects the rights of the family, and Catholics are free to follow their own system of teaching in schools that are entirely Catholic. Nor is distributive justice lost sight of, as is evidenced by the financial aid granted by the State to the several schools demanded by the families.

In other countries of mixed creeds, things are otherwise, and a heavy burden weighs upon Catholics, who under the guidance of their Bishops and with the indefatigable coöperation of the clergy, secular and regular, support Catholic schools for their children entirely at their own expense; to this they feel obliged in conscience, and with a generosity and constancy worthy of all praise, they are firmly determined to make adequate provision for what they openly profess as their motto: "Catholic education in Catholic schools for all the Catholic youth." If such education is not aided from public funds, as distributive justice requires, certainly it may not be opposed by any civil authority ready to recognize the rights of the family, and the irreducible claims of legitimate liberty.

Where this fundamental liberty is thwarted or interfered

50Ep. enc. *Militantis Ecclesiae,* 1 Aug. 1897: Necesse est non modo certis horis doceri iuvenes religionem, sed reliquam institutionem omnem christianae pietatis sensus redolere. Id si desit. si sacer hic halitus non doctorum animos ac discentum pervadat foveatque. exiguae capientur ex qualibet doctrina utilitates; damna saepe consequentur haud exigua.

with, Catholics will never feel, whatever may have been the sacrifices already made, that they have done enough, for the support and defense of their schools and for the securing of laws that will do them justice.

### Catholic Action

For whatever Catholics do in promoting and defending the Catholic school for their children, is a genuinely religious work and therefore an important task of "Catholic Action." For this reason the associations which in various countries are so zealously engaged in this work of prime necessity, are especially dear to Our paternal heart and are deserving of every commendation.

Let it be loudly proclaimed and well understood and recognized by all, that Catholics, no matter what their nationality, in agitating for Catholic schools for their children, are not mixing in party politics, but are engaged in a religious enterprise demanded by conscience. They do not intend to separate their children either from the body of the nation or its spirit, but to educate them in a perfect manner, most conducive to the prosperity of the nation. Indeed a good Catholic, precisely because of his Catholic principles, makes the better citizen, attached to his country, and loyally submissive to constituted civil authority in every legitimate form of government.

In such a school, in harmony with the Church and the Christian family, the various branches of secular learning will not enter into conflict with religious instruction to the manifest detriment of education. And if, when occasion arises, it be deemed necessary to have the students read authors, propounding false doctrine, for the purpose of refuting it, this will be done after due preparation and with such an antidote of sound doctrine, that it will not only do no harm, but will be an aid to the Christian formation of youth.

In such a school moreover, the study of the vernacular and of classical literature will do no damage to moral virtue. There the Christian teacher will imitate the bee, which takes the choicest part of the flower and leaves the rest, as St. Basil teaches in his discourse to youths on the study of the classics.[51] Nor will this necessary caution, suggested also by the pagan

[51] *P. G.*, t. 31, 570.

Quintilian,[52] in any way hinder the Christian teacher from gathering and turning to profit whatever there is of real worth in the systems and methods of our modern times, mindful of the Apostle's advice: "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."[53] Hence in accepting the new, he will not hastily abandon the old, which the experience of centuries has found expedient and profitable. This is particularly true in the teaching of Latin, which in our days is falling more and more into disuse, because of the unreasonable rejection of methods so successfully used by that sane humanism, whose highest development was reached in the schools of the Church. These notable traditions of the past require that the youth committed to Catholic schools be fully instructed in the letters and sciences in accordance with the exigencies of the times. They also demand that the doctrine imparted be deep and solid, especially in sound philosophy, avoiding the muddled superficiality of those "who perhaps would have found the necessary, had they not gone in search of the superfluous."[54] In this connection Christian teachers should keep in mind what Leo XIII says in a pithy sentence: "Greater stress must be laid on the employment of apt and solid methods of teaching, and, what is still more important, on bringing into full conformity with the Catholic faith, what is taught in literature, in the sciences, and above all in philosophy, on which depends in great part the right orientation of the other branches of knowledge."[55]

## Good Teachers

Perfect schools are the result not so much of good methods as of good teachers, teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His church, of which these are the children of predilection; and who have therefore sincerely at heart the true good of family and country. Indeed it fills Our soul with consolation and gratitude towards

52*Inst. Or.*, 1, 8. 53I. Thess. v. 21: omnia probate; quod bonum est tenete.

54Seneca, *Epist.* 45: invenissent forsitan necessaria nisi et superflua quaesiissent.

55Leo XIII, Ep. enc., *Inscrutabli* 21 Apr. 1878: . . . alacrius adnitendum est, ut non solum apta ac solida institutionis methodus, sed maxime institutio ipsa catholicae fidei omnino conformis in litteris et disciplinis vigeat, praesertim autem in philosophia, ex qua recta aliarum scientiarum ratio magna ex parte dependet.

the Divine Goodness to see, side by side with religious men and women engaged in teaching, such a large number of excellent lay teachers, who, for their greater spiritual advancement, are often grouped in special sodalities and associations, which are worthy of praise and encouragement as most excellent and powerful auxiliaries of "Catholic Action." All these labor unselfishly with zeal and perseverance in what St. Gregory Nazianzen calls "the art of arts and the science of sciences,"[56] the direction and formation of youth. Of them also it may be said in the words of the Divine Master: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers few."[57] Let us then pray the Lord of the harvest to send more such workers into the field of Christian education; and let their formation be one of the principal concerns of the pastors of souls and of the superiors of religious orders.

It is no less necessary to direct and watch the education of the adolescent, "soft as wax to be molded into vice,"[58] in whatever other environment he may happen to be, removing occasions of evil and providing occasions for good in his recreations and social intercourse; for "evil communications corrupt good manners."[59]

## The World and Its Dangers

More than ever nowadays an extended and careful vigilance is necessary, inasmuch as the dangers of moral and religious shipwreck are greater for inexperienced youth. Especially is this true of impious and immoral books, often diabolically circulated at low prices; of the cinema, which multiplies every kind of exhibition; and now also of the radio, which facilitates every kind of reading. These most powerful means of publicity, which can be of great utility for instruction and education when directed by sound principles, are only too often used as an incentive to evil passion and greed for gain. St. Augustine deplored the passions for the shows of the circus which possessed even some Christians of his time, and he dramatically narrates the infatua-

56Oratio II, *P. G.*, t. 35, 426: ars artium et scientia scientiarum.
57Matt. ix. 37: Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci.
58Horat., *Art. poet.*, v. 163: cereus in vitium flecti.
59I. Cor. xv. 33c: corrumpunt mores bonos colloquia mala.

tion for them, fortunately only temporary, of his disciple and friend Alipius.[60] How often today must parents and educators bewail the corruption of youth brought about by the modern theater and the vile book!

Worthy of all praise and encouragement therefore are those educational associations which have for their object to point out to parents and educators, by means of suitable books and periodicals, the dangers to morals and religion that are often cunningly disguised in books and theatrical representations. In their spirit of zeal for the souls of the young, they endeavor at the same time to circulate good literature and to promote plays that are really instructive, going so far as to put up at the cost of great sacrifices, theaters and cinemas, in which virtue will have nothing to suffer and much to gain.

This necessary vigilance does not demand that young people be removed from the society in which they must live and save their souls; but that today more than ever they should be forewarned and forearmed as Christians against the seductions and the errors of the world, which, as Holy Writ admonishes us, is all "concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes and pride of life."[61] Let them be what Tertullian wrote of the first Christians, and what Christians of all times ought to be, "sharers in the possession of the world, not of its error."[62]

This saying of Tertullian brings us to the topic which we propose to treat in the last place, and which is of the greatest importance, that is, the true nature of Christian education, as deduced from its proper end. Its consideration reveals with noon-day clearness the preëminent educational mission of the Church.

The proper and immediate end of Christian education is to coöperate with divine grace in forming the true and perfect Christian, that is, to form Christ Himself in those regenerated by baptism, according to the emphatic expression of the Apostle: "My little children, of whom I am in labor again, until Christ be formed in you."[63] For the true Christian must live a super-

60*Conf.*, VII, 8.
61I. Io., II, 16: concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum et superbia vitae.
62*De Idololatria*, 14: compossessores mundi, non erroris.
63Gal. iv. 19: Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis.

natural life in Christ: "Christ Who is your life,"[64] and display it in all his actions: "That the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh."[65]

For precisely this reason, Christian education takes in the whole aggregate of human life, physical and spiritual, intellectual and moral, individual, domestic and social, not with a view of reducing it in any way, but in order to elevate, regulate and perfect it, in accordance with the example and teaching of Christ.

### The True Christian

Hence the true Christian, product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. For, it is not every kind of consistency and firmness of conduct based on subjective principles that makes true character, but only constancy in following the eternal principles of justice, as is admitted even by the pagan poet when he praises as one and the same "the man who is just and firm of purpose."[66] And on the other hand, there cannot be full justice except in giving to God what is due to God, as the true Christian does.

The scope and aim of Christian education as here described, appears to the worldly as an abstraction, or rather as something that cannot be attained without the suppression or dwarfing of the natural faculties, and without a renunciation of the activities of the present life, and hence inimical to social life and temporal prosperity, and contrary to all progress in letters, arts and sciences, and all the other elements of civilization. To a like objection raised by the ignorance and the prejudice of even cultured pagans of a former day, and repeated with greater frequency and insistence in modern times, Tertullian has replied as follows: "We are not strangers to life. We are fully aware of the gratitude we owe to God, Our Lord and Creator. We reject none of the fruits of His handiwork; we only abstain from their immoderate or unlawful use. We are living in the world

64Col. iii. 4: Christus, vita vestra.

65II. Cor. iv. 11: ut et vita Iesu manifestetur in carne nostra mortali.

66Horat., *Od.* 1, III, od. 3, v. 1: Iustum et tenacem propositi virum.

with you; we do not shun your forum, your markets, your baths, your shops, your factories, your stables, your places of business and traffic. We take ship with you and we serve in your armies, we are farmers and merchants with you; we interchange skilled labor and display our works in public for your service. How we can seem unprofitable to you with whom we live and of whom we are, I know not."[67]

The true Christian does not renounce the activities of this life, he does not stunt his natural faculties; but he develops and perfects them, by coördinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles what is merely natural in life and secures for it new strength in the material and temporal order, no less than in the spiritual and eternal.

### Evidence of History

This fact is proved by the whole history of Christianity and its institutions, which is nothing else but the history of true civilization and progress up to the present day. It stands out conspicuously in the lives of the numerous saints, whom the Church, and she alone, produces, in whom is perfectly realized the purpose of Christian education, and who have in every way ennobled and benefited human society. Indeed, the saints have ever been, are, and ever will be the greatest benefactors of society, and perfect models for every class and profession, for every state and condition of life, from the simple and uncultured peasant to the master of sciences and letters, from the humble artisan to the commander of armies, from the father of a family to the ruler of peoples and nations, from simple maidens and matrons of the domestic hearth to queens and empresses. What shall we say of the immense work which has been accomplished even for the temporal well-being of men by missionaries of the Gospel, who have brought and still bring to barbarous tribes the benefits of civilization together with the light of the faith? What of the founders of so many social and charitable institutions, of the vast numbers of saintly educators, men and women, who

67 *Apol.*, 42: Non sumus exules vitae. Meminimus gratiam nos debere Deo Domino Creatori: nullum fructum operum eius repudiamus; plane temperamus, ne ultra modum aut perperam utamur. Itaque non sine foro, non sine macello, non sine balneis, tabernis, officinis, stabulis, nundinis vestris, caeterisque commerciis cohabitamus in hoc saeculo. Navigamus et nos vobiscum et militamus et rusticamur, et mercamur, proinde miscemus artes, operas nostras publicamus usui vestro. Quomodo infructuosi videamur negotiis vestris, cum quibus et de quibus vivimus, no scio.

have perpetuated and multiplied their life-work, by leaving after them prolific institutions of Christian education, in aid of families and for the inestimable advantage of nations?

Such are the fruits of Christian education. Their price and value is derived from the supernatural virtue and life in Christ which Christian education forms and develops in man. Of this life and virtue Christ Our Lord and Master is the source and dispenser. By His example He is at the same time the universal model accessible to all, especially to the young in the period of His hidden life, a life of labor and obedience, adorned with all virtues, personal, domestic and social, before God and men.

## Conclusion

Now all this array of priceless educational treasures which We have barely touched upon, is so truly a property of the Church as to form her very substance, since she is the mystical body of Christ, the immaculate spouse of Christ, and consequently a most admirable mother and an incomparable and perfect teacher. This thought inspired St. Augustine, the great genius of whose blessed death we are about to celebrate the fifteenth centenary, with accents of tenderest love for so glorious a mother: "O Catholic Church, true Mother of Christians! Not only dost thou preach to us, as is meet, how purely and chastely we are to worship God Himself, Whom to possess is life most blessed; thou dost moreover so cherish neighborly love and charity, that all the infirmities to which sinful souls are subject, find their most potent remedy in thee. Childlike thou art in molding the child, strong with the young man, gentle with the aged, dealing with each according to his needs of mind and of body. Thou dost subject child to parent in a sort of free servitude, and settest parent over child in a jurisdiction of love. Thou bindest brethren to brethren by the bond of religion, stronger and closer than the bond of blood. . . . Thou unitest citizen to citizen, nation to nation, yea, all men, in a union not of companionship only, but of brotherhood, reminding them of their common origin. Thou teachest kings to care for their people, and biddest people to be subject to their kings. Thou teachest assiduously to whom honor is due, to whom love, to whom reverence, to whom fear, to whom comfort, to whom rebuke, to whom punishment; showing us that whilst not all

things nor the same things are due to all, charity is due to all and offense to none."[68]

Let us then, Venerable Brethren, raise our hands and our hearts in supplication to heaven, "to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,"[69] to the divine King "Who gives laws to rulers," that in His almighty power He may cause these splendid fruits of Christian education to be gathered in ever greater abundance "in the whole world," for the lasting benefit of individuals and of nations.

As a pledge of these heavenly favors, with paternal affection We impart to you, Venerable Brethren, to your clergy and your people, the Apostolic benediction.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the thirty-first day of December, in the year 1929, the eighth of Our Pontificate.

68*De moribus Ecclesiae catholicae,* lib. I, c. 30: Merito Ecclesia catholica Mater christianorum verissima, non solum ipsum Deum, cuius adeptio vita est beatissima, purissime atque castissime colendum praedicas; sed etiam proximi dilectionem atque charitatem ita complecteris, ut variorum morborum, quibus pro peccatis suis animae aegrotant, omnis apud te medicina praepolleat. Tu pueriliter, pueros, fortiter iuvenes, quiete senes prout cuiusque non corporis tantum, sed et animi aetas est, exerces ac doces. Tu parentibus filios libera quadam servitute subiungis, parentes filiis pia dominatione praeponis. Tu fratribus fratres religionis vinculo firmiore atque arctiore quam sanguinis nectis . . . Tu cives civibus, gentes gentibus, et prorsus homines primorum parentum recordatione, non societate tantum, sed quadam etiam fraternitate coniungis. Doces Reges prospicere populis; mones populos se subdere Regibus. Quibus honor debeatur, quibus affectus, quibus reverentia, quibus timor, quibus consolatio, quibus admonitio, quibus cohortatio, quibus disciplina, quibus obiurgatio, quibus supplicium, sedulo, doces; ostendens quemadmodum et non omnibus omnia, et omnibus charitas, et nulli debeatur iniuria.

69Cfr. I. Petr. ii. 25: ad Pastorem et Episcopum animarum vestrarum.

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